



April 4, 2005

Social Security employee is charged with fraudulently creating Social Security numbers

Maria Diaz, an employee in the Pawtucket office of the Social Security Administration, has been charged in a federal complaint with fraudulently creating more than 200 Social Security numbers for illegal aliens. Diaz was allegedly paid between \$200 and \$500 for each fraudulent Social Security number that she generated.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente and Leo J. Sullivan, Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, jointly announced the complaint, which was filed last week in U.S. District Court, Providence.

On April 1, agents arrested Diaz, 47, of Apartment 2, 30 Warwick Road, Pawtucket. She appeared that day before Magistrate Judge David L. Martin, who released her on unsecured bond.

The complaint charges Diaz with wire fraud. A complaint is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The charge is a felony and therefore subject to review by a federal grand jury.

According to an affidavit supporting the complaint, Diaz had been employed at the Social Security Administration's Pawtucket District Office since 1997. Since 2000, as part of her duties as a service representative, she processed and certified applications for Social Security numbers.

-more-

As a result of information developed by the **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**, the **Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General** investigated Diaz's activities and developed evidence that, since May 2002, she had been falsifying applications for Social Security numbers.

According to the affidavit, Diaz created false alien identification numbers for applicants and fraudulently certified that she had verified the applicants' immigration status. Diaz processed the false information through the Social Security Administration's computer system, generating Social Security numbers and cards for the applicants.

According to the affidavit, between May 2002 and July 2004, Diaz fraudulently created about 229 Social Security numbers. An unidentified individual allegedly paid her between \$200 and \$500 for each fraudulently obtained number.

The **Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General** investigated the case, with assistance from the **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement**. Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee Vilker is prosecuting the case.

-30-

Contact: 401-709-5032

Thomas.connell@usdoj.gov